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Date: Thursday, March 22, 2012

**Michael Mayo, Sr.**

To: Mark Gottlieb, P.E., Secretary, Wisconsin Department of Transportation  
Wisconsin Transportation Finance and Policy Commission

**1st Vice Chairman  
County Board Supervisor,  
7th District**

From: Milwaukee County Supervisor Michael Mayo, Sr., 7<sup>th</sup> District  
1<sup>st</sup> Vice-Chair, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors  
Chairman, Committee on Transportation, Public Works and Transit

Secretary Gottlieb, thank you for bringing the Transportation Finance and Policy Commission to Milwaukee, the economic engine of Wisconsin. I am Supervisor Michael Mayo, Sr., and I serve as 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-Chair of the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors. An elected official for eighteen years, I represent about 52,000 City of Milwaukee residents.

Milwaukee County appreciates the opportunity you have provided local officials to present on our region's significant transportation needs. As Chair of the County Board's Committee on Transportation, Public Works and Transit, I am here to tell you, the Milwaukee County Transit System is the heartbeat of Milwaukee, and it has not received the type of support it deserves from the State.

We desperately need the Governor and the Wisconsin Legislature to support a long-term funding solution for the existing rubber-tire bus system in Milwaukee County and to reverse the 10% cut in state operating assistance for mass transit.

Therefore, I implore you, as a Commission, to strongly and unanimously recommend that the State adopt legislation enabling Milwaukee County to create a dedicated local sales tax for transit and to support legislative action to reverse the 10% cut in transit aid. Milwaukee County supports state legislation, like Senate Bill 436 and Assembly Bill 577, to reverse this cut in transit aid.

Milwaukee County voters already have approved taking transit off the property tax. They have publicly, and democratically, voiced their support for dedicated transit funding. Without dedicated funding, Milwaukee County residents who depend on the bus will face further service reductions and fare increases.

We cannot – and must not – place additional economic hardships on our employees, students, and elderly residents. Continued inaction also constrains area employers who rely on MCTS to connect workers with jobs.

It is terrible that, instead of creating a dedicated funding source for transit, the Legislature went along with the Governor's budget recommendation to cut operating assistance by 10 percent. At the same time it was cutting transit, the Legislature also provided additional funding to the state highway system. Additionally, the 2011-2013 budget limits the ability of local municipalities to go to the property tax to fund vital services like transit. These inequitable budget decisions disproportionately affect low-income and minority populations because they make greater use of and have greater dependence on transit.

The Commission's consideration of this request, and the testimony of transit operators and advocates today, is appreciated. A positive recommendation from this Commission is needed to move forward legislation that would give local governments the tools they need to stabilize their own transit systems.

Remember that, as Milwaukee goes, so goes the state. So, let's work together to make the findings of this Commission a win-win for Milwaukee County and the employers and employees who depend on our transit system.